



HOUSE DEMOCRATIC OFFICE

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FACT SHEET ON MINORITY VOTE SUPPRESSION UNDER REPUBLICAN ELECTIONS LEGISLATION

Representative Joe Gibbons (D-Pembroke Park) and Representative Luis Garcia (D-Miami) issued the following fact sheet today about House PCB-EDCA 09-08, a Republican-sponsored measure to suppress the minority vote in Florida.

The bill is a partisan power grab by Republican legislative leaders that aims to suppress voting turnout and registration drives among African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities.

Over the past several election cycles, a clear pattern has emerged in which minority communities show a preference for in person voting, while Florida's non-Hispanic white voters are increasingly voting by mail.

Because Republicans are adding impediments to voter registration efforts, Early Voting, Election Day voting, and election protection efforts to ensure that minority voters can exercise their right to vote without intimidation, this is a clear effort to suppress minority voters who increasingly lean Democratic.

Specifically this legislation would:

- Expand the “no-solicitation zone,” restricting voters’ ability to receive important voting rights information at the polling place;
- Further limit acceptable IDs, without proposing acceptable alternatives, preventing eligible citizens from registering to vote, and properly registered voters from exercising their right to vote;
- Force more voters to vote by provisional ballots, which disproportionately affects minority voters and have a higher rate of rejection;
- Increase the frequency of “list maintenance programs” causing more validly registered voters to be removed from the voter rolls;

- Impose unnecessary and onerous restrictions on third-party voter registration groups. This would have the direct effect of decreasing electoral participation by Floridians who are significantly more likely to register through these drives, especially eligible African American and Hispanic voters.

Confirming trends from previous elections, data from the 2008 General Election shows that the Republican efforts to target in person voting (Early Vote & Election Day Voting) would disproportionately harm minorities.

Out of all ballots cast in the 2008 General Election, 75.5% of Floridians voted in person and 24.5% voted by mail. Of the votes cast, 82.8% of African Americans and 80.4% of Hispanics who voted did so in person, while only 73.1% of Caucasian voting did the same.

Additionally, the restrictions on voter registration drives are designed to hurt minority communities. While only 12.9% of Florida's voters are African American, in the months leading up to the 2008 election 19.8% of the newly registering voters were black.

Similarly, while just 11.9% of voters are Hispanic, 19.4% of the newly registered voters during that same time were Hispanic. (While 69.2% of Florida's voters are white, just 46.5% of these new voters were the same.) Because these restrictions are aimed at hurting efforts to register minority voters, these restrictions dilute the African American and Hispanic communities' access to the ballot box.

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